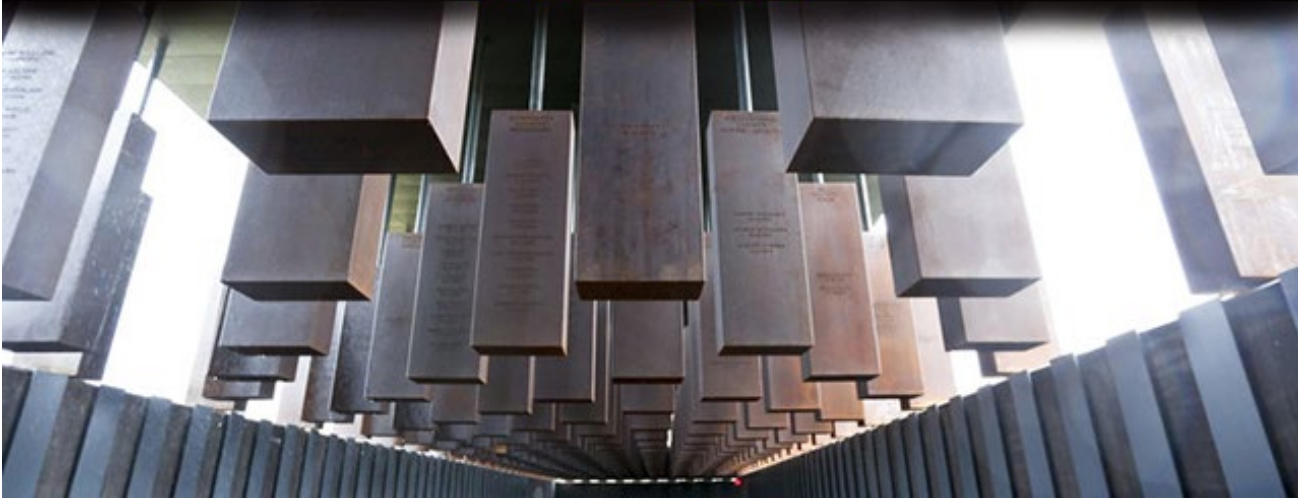


ALEXANDRIA COMMUNITY REMEMBRANCE PROJECT NEWSLETTER



May 2021 Edition

Commemoration, Equity and Controversy

In remembrance of the two racial terror lynchings that occurred in Alexandria, and elsewhere in the United States, architectural students from the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, Hampton University, and the Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center spent a weekend in January 2021 designing an imagined pillar installation for the City of Alexandria's Market Square.

Each year, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) holds a competition at the start of the spring semester with cash prizes for the winning entries. The design charrette engages students at every accredited school of architecture in Virginia. It opens at the same time at each institution; students are given the competition program on a Friday at 5 p.m. They work over the weekend to create a board presenting their design solution by 9 a.m. the following Monday.

The [2021 AIA Virginia Prize Competition](#) was based on the Equal Justice Initiative's (EJI) Memorial for Peace and Justice consisting of stark bronze pillars for every region in the United States where lynchings occurred. EJI has pillars for each of these regions that will be released. The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project is dedicated to memorializing Joseph McCoy and Benjamin Thomas who were both lynched in our city in 1897 and 1899 respectively.

The architectural students were tasked with designing a space at Alexandria's Market Square for the EJI bronze pillar to be displayed. The students and faculty had access to the Alexandria Community Project (ACRP) website with detailed histories of both Joseph McCoy and Benjamin Thomas written by the ACRP's Research Committee.

The winning design by [Ryan Burnett from Virginia Tech](#) includes paths that reach out of Market Square, connecting the monument to the sites where Alexandria's victims, Joseph McCoy and Benjamin Thomas, were lynched.

Audrey Davis, director of the Alexandria Black History Museum and one of the co-chairs of the ACRP Steering Committee, was one of the six jurors who selected the honorees. A virtual awards ceremony was held on April 16, 2021, where the winning students shared their design inspirations.

Images of other award-winning designs can be viewed [here](#).

Please note that this competition was not a City of Alexandria or Alexandria Community Remembrance Project official competition. None of these designs are under consideration. Once Alexandria's EJ1 pillar is released, a formal City design process will begin, which will include public input.

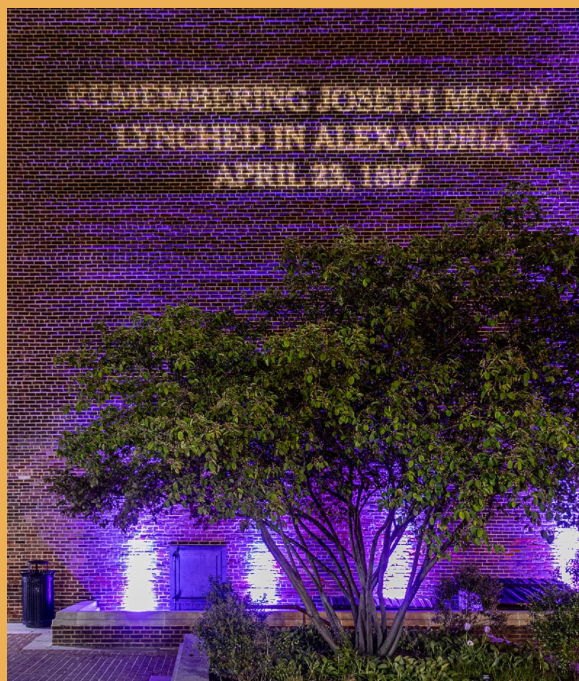
This June, the AIA exhibit will open at the Torpedo Factory Art Center. For more information, please visit [here](#).

In The News

On Friday morning, April 23, 2021 between the hours of 8 and 9 a.m., Alexandria, in quiet humility, recognized the lynching of Joseph McCoy. The young Black man, a native of our city, was murdered by his own community in the first hours of Friday, April 23, 1897. To memorialize his tragic death, [ACRP unveiled a historic marker](#) on the nearest lamp post on Lee and Cameron streets.

At the event, [a new proclamation](#) was read out by Mayor Wilson and is available to read on the city website. The Alexandria Gazette covered the event and the report can be [read here](#).

Both City Hall and the Masonic Temple were shrouded in purple lights (the color of mourning) over the weekend to further remember the lynching of Joseph McCoy.



Upcoming Events

May 15, 1-2:30 p.m., VIRTUAL Lecture: "A White Historian Explores Black Voting Rights."

Join us for a series of four free lectures with historian Susan Strasser supporting the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project. Susan Strasser is an award-winning historian and a Distinguished Lecturer for the Organization of American Historians. She has been praised by the New Yorker for "retrieving what history discards: The taken-for-granted minutiae of everyday life." Sponsored by the Alexandria Community Remembrance Project. Please note this event will not be recorded. [Register here](#) to attend this free virtual event.

June 12, 1-2:00 p.m., VIRTUAL Lecture: "A White Historian Confronts Residential Segregation." Join us to hear Susan Strasser as she brings her early years as a civil rights activist and experience as an American history professor to "A White Historian Reads Black History." This is part four of an amazing series that this award-winning historian and Distinguished Lecturer for the Organization of American Historians is sharing with Alexandria. She has been praised by the New Yorker for "retrieving what history discards: the taken-for-granted minutiae of everyday life." [Register here](#).

Upcoming Committee Meetings

May 19 Community Remembrance Project Steering Committee Meeting 5-7 p.m. Virtual meeting held via Zoom. Register to [join](#).

May 24 Community Remembrance Project Pilgrimage Committee Meeting 7-8 p.m. Virtual Meeting held via Zoom. Register to [join](#).

May 25 Community Remembrance Project Marketing Committee Meeting 7-8 p.m. Virtual meeting held via Zoom. Register to [join](#).

May 27 Community Remembrance Project Soil and Marker Committee Meeting 7-8 p.m. Virtual meeting held via Zoom. Register to [join](#).

Committee Reports

Soil and Marker Committee - The committee is finalizing the text for the Benjamin Thomas marker. The marker installation is planned for August 6.

Pilgrimage Committee - The members continue to plan the 2022 trip to Montgomery, Alabama to deliver soil from the lynching sites of Joseph H. McCoy and Benjamin Thomas. They are also exploring an ACRP “meet up!” to take a tour of Alexandria’s social justice-related sites.

Education Committee - Members met virtually on March 23, 2021. This was the first meeting since the pandemic and the focus was on looking at past goals and trying to establish a plan for moving forward. Priorities will be the upcoming remembrance for the Lynching of Benjamin Thomas on August 8, 2021, creating a social justice curriculum with ACPS, establishing the guidelines for the EJI Student Essay Contest, and outlining future program ideas. The group did not meet in April.

Marketing Committee - A regular meeting date of the 4th Tuesday of each month, beginning in May, was established by the committee. They explored ways in which to increase visibility in the community about the work of the ACRP.

[Joseph McCoy](#) [Benjamin Thomas](#).

[For more information](#)

[Donate to the Project](#)

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The Alexandria Community Remembrance Project (ACRP) is a city-wide initiative dedicated to helping Alexandria understand its history of racial terror hate crimes and to work toward creating a welcoming community bound by equity and inclusion.

**Office of Historic Alexandria
City of Alexandria, Virginia**



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